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**FOUR INDICTED IN SCHEME TO DEFRAUD ENGLEHARD
CORPORATION OF \$11 MILLION IN PRECIOUS METALS**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a Federal Grand Jury in Sacramento returned an indictment charging GABRIEL IKECHI ORJI, 53, and TROY URIE, 32, both of San Jose, California, along with KATIE McGUIRE, 22 and NICODEMUS JUSTIN BLANCHARD, 22, both of Reno, Nevada, with conspiracy to commit mail fraud.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney James P. Arguelles, who is prosecuting the case, the indictment charges that during the period of October through December of 2003, defendants ORJI, URIE, McGUIRE, and BLANCHARD were part of a conspiracy to defraud and obtain property from victims Sanmina-SCI Corporation ("SSCI"), a technology company headquartered in San Jose, and Englehard Corporation ("Englehard"), a New Jersey company which sells precious metals. The object of the conspiracy was to cause Englehard to ship, by private or commercial interstate carrier, approximately \$11 million in precious metals from New Jersey to a facility located on Northgate Blvd. in Sacramento, which was under the control of the defendants.

Specifically, the indictment alleges that as part of the conspiracy, an individual fraudulently representing himself to be the president of the printed circuit board division of SSCI contacted Englehard by email. SSCI is a large company which produces, among other things, computer circuitry boards. It utilizes precious metals in the course of some of its manufacturing processes. Via a series of emails, the individual posing as an officer of SSCI advised Englehard that SSCI wished to purchase 300 kilograms of gold and 300 kilograms of palladium in "sponge" form, valued at approximately \$11 million. Englehard was further directed to ship the gold and palladium from New Jersey by commercial carrier to a warehouse on Northgate Blvd. in Sacramento which was falsely represented to be a facility belonging to SSCI. SSCI, however, had no facilities in the Sacramento area.

The indictment alleges that during the first part of November 2003, defendants ORJI, URIE, and McGUIRE made the arrangements to lease a warehouse facility located at 4640 Northgate Blvd. in Sacramento. McGUIRE picked up the keys and the lease under an assumed name, URIE sent a cashier's check to cover the rent to the leasing agent, and ORJI and URIE set up the inside of the office/warehouse, which included the placing of bogus SSCI signs outside of

the premises. Acting at the direction of ORJI and URIE, McGUIRE and BLANCHARD periodically occupied the warehouse in anticipation of the delivery of the shipment from Englehard. On December 2, 2003, Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation arranged for the controlled delivery of a pallet, which was filled with buckets of sand, to be delivered to the warehouse at 4640 Northgate Blvd. After receiving and accepting the shipment, defendants McGUIRE, BLANCHARD, and ORJI were arrested at the warehouse.

If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison for the conspiracy. In addition, each defendant also faces a fine of up to \$250,000.

The charges in the indictment are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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